

NEWS

From the Office of

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County, Victor Valley College Agree to Expand Head Start Program

SAN BERNARDINO – The San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors today approved an agreement with the Victor Valley Community College District to provide an additional site for Head Start and Early Head Start programs to serve the area's preschool children.

"Education is the most important tool for building a prosperous future and these programs help preschoolers lay a great foundation for building a better life," said First District Supervisor Brad Mitzelfelt. "This will expand the capacity of these programs and give a leg up to our next generation of High Desert citizens."

The County's Preschool Services Department administers the federally funded Head Start Program and the California State Department of Education Preschool Programs to low-income children and their families throughout the County. The department currently operates a Head Start program on Anacapa Road in Victorville with 170 children and staff. That program is full and there are 150 students on the waiting list. The additional site will be able to serve approximately 80 children.

Head Start is a preschool program for disadvantaged children, but the program is also designed to assist the entire family in taking steps to better their lives. Families with incomes below the federal poverty level (\$22,050 for a family of four) are eligible. Some children in families above the poverty level are also eligible, including children with special needs, foster children and children in working families. Parents interested in the program may call 1-(888) 543-7025.

The department met recently with the Victor Valley Community College District about leasing additional space at the District's Child Care Facility Complex located at 18422 Bear Valley Road in Victorville. The college district agreed to a 10-year lease for 8,558 square feet of classroom and office space and 23,246 square feet of playground area. The lease includes options for two five-year extensions.

The college district will make some improvements and repairs to the facility at its cost and the County will cover the cost to install fencing, modify the heating and air conditioning system, and make other improvements. The total 10-year cost of the lease is \$1,491,000.

The Preschool Services Department serves over 5,000 disadvantaged Head Start and State Preschool children annually at 40 locations throughout the county. The comprehensive educational and support services provided to children and families include: education, health, nutrition, and psychological services.